

NEWS & NOTES

Industry tidbits from around the country

Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

▶▶▶ FDA announces food traceability proposed rule

Sept. 21 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a proposed rule to establish additional traceability recordkeeping requirements for certain foods (see <https://bit.ly/2RQlyAm>). It also published a draft “Food Traceability List,” which describes the foods that would be subject to the proposed requirements. The list includes leafy greens, fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, some types of fish, shell eggs and nut butters.

While limited to only certain foods, this proposal lays the foundation for a standardized

approach to traceability recordkeeping, paving the way for industry to adopt, harmonize and leverage more digital traceability systems in the future. Where possible, FDA has drawn on existing consensus standards that industry members may already be using.

The proposed rule, *Requirements for Additional Traceability Records for Certain Foods* (Food Traceability Proposed Rule) is a key component of the FDA’s New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint and would implement Section 204(d) of the *FDA Food Safety Modernization Act*

(FSMA). If finalized, the proposal would standardize the data elements and information firms must establish and maintain, and the information they would need to send to the next entity in the supply chain to facilitate rapid and accurate traceability.

Existing FDA regulations require much of the food industry to establish and maintain records to identify the immediate previous sources and the immediate



subsequent recipients of foods (commonly referred to as “one-up, one-back” recordkeeping).

These requirements form a baseline for traceability recordkeeping, but they provide limited information to effectively and rapidly link shipments of food through each point in the supply chain. This — and the fact that recordkeeping systems can be largely paper-based and lack a universal lexicon throughout industry — can make it difficult to trace a product to its original source when necessary.

As a result, many foodborne illness outbreak investigations have been slowed, resulting in more illnesses and economic loss. Improved traceability, as envisioned by the proposed rule, would allow the FDA to more quickly identify the source of a contaminated product, reduce the scope of product recalls, and conduct more timely root-cause investigations to learn more about how contamination occurred in order to prevent future outbreaks.

The proposed rule and draft Food Traceability List are available for public comment for 120 days from the date of publication. The FDA will also be holding three public meetings during the public comment period.

▶▶▶ CFAP 2 underway

President Donald J. Trump and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue Sept. 18 announced up to an additional \$14 billion for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 2) began Sept. 21 and will run through Dec. 11, 2020.

The USDA will use funds being

▶▶▶ Benoit Angus donates 2021 Foundation Heifer Pick

It is not every day the event arises to have a personal choice of a heifer from a high-caliber Angus operation like Benoit Angus. The 2021 Angus Foundation Heifer offering is a unique opportunity with a generous donation from Everett and Bonnie Benoit of Benoit Angus in Esbon, Kan. This offering grants the winning bidder the chance to select a female from the entire heifer crop of Benoit Angus.

“The Association has given so much to us, so we wanted to give back,” says Doug Benoit, Benoit Angus co-owner.

The package will be offered for sale as a part of the American Angus Association National Angus Bull Sale. The proceeds of the sale will generate unrestricted funds to support educational programs and scholarships.

The reputation of the Benoit family program is proven through the success of their

commercial customers with their females and bulls. Using sires like their GAR Discovery son EMAW, SydGen Enhance, BUB’s Southern Charm AA31, GAR Inertia, GAR Ashland, SAV Rainfall 6846, Connealy



Confidence Plus and E&B Plus One, combined with their powerful cow families like E&B 6807 Traveler 61 and E&B Erica 174

builds their program on a powerful foundation.

“We’ve got some outstanding heifers,” Benoit says. “This may be our best calf crop yet of both bulls and heifers.”

The package also includes 30 days of free insurance from American Live Stock Insurance Co., Batavia, Ill.; free transportation to the buyer’s ranch provided by Lathrop Livestock Transportation, Dundee, Ill.; and an advanced reproductive technology package from Trans Ova Genetics, Sioux Center, Iowa.

“We are grateful the Benoit

family graciously offered their 2020 heifer crop as an opportunity to support the Angus Foundation and its supporting efforts,” says Thomas Marten, Angus Foundation executive director. “We are also extremely fortunate to have our add-on sponsors. This year will be the 34th year for Lathrop Livestock Transportation, and the 28th year for Trans Ova Genetics and American Live Stock Insurance Company.”

Typically, this sale of the Angus Foundation Heifer is offered at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colo. With the cancellation of the 2021 show, plans are underway to host the sale at another event this winter, but the exact time is yet to be determined.

For more information on the 2021 Angus Foundation Heifer Pick, contact Thomas Marten at tmarten@angus.org or visit www.angusfoundation.org.

▶▶▶ NMPF offers toolbox to dairy farmers as latest CFAP round signup starts

Following USDA's announcement of a second round of disaster assistance to ag producers, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) created a resource guide to help farmers understand and apply for the program. The toolbox includes a breakdown of what the latest Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) includes for dairy, which directly or indirectly affects the beef industry.

Highlights of the so-called CFAP 2.0 include:

- ▶ A dairy payment amounting to \$1.20-per-hundredweight on a farm's production during the last nine months of 2020.
- ▶ 100% of the payment will be made once a farm's eligibility is determined, meaning there will be no 20% holdback as with earlier assistance.
- ▶ For dairy beef, producers are eligible for cattle inventory payment on bull calves and dairy steers, but not for breeding stock. The payment

is \$55 per head on eligible cattle in inventory on a date between April and the end of August selected by the producer.

- ▶ Significantly, this round's payment limitation provision has been expanded to include trusts and estates for both rounds of CFAP payments. The application of direct attribution is also modified so payment limits won't be reduced based on ownership shares, providing more equitable support to dairy farmers of various ownership structures.

Coronavirus-related materials to help guide dairy producers, processors and allied businesses are available at nmpf.org/coronavirus. NMPF also has set up a separate webpage dedicated to resources to help dairy farmers struggling through natural disasters at nmpf.org/disaster-resources.

made available from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act and CARES Act to support row crops, livestock, specialty crops, dairy, aquaculture and many additional commodities.

Producers can apply for CFAP 2 at USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices. This program provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Producers will be compensated for ongoing market disruptions and assisted with the associated marketing costs.

▶▶▶ Checkoff dollars budgeted for FY 2021

The Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) will invest approximately \$39,380,000 into programs for beef promotion, research, consumer information, industry information, foreign marketing and producer communications during fiscal year

(FY) 2021, subject to USDA approval.

At the end of its Sept. 9-10 meeting in Denver, Colo., the Beef Promotion Operating Committee (BPOC) approved checkoff funding for a total of 13 grant proposals brought by nine contractors for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2021. The committee includes 10 producers from the CBB and 10 producers from the Federation of State Beef Councils.

"Producers drive all the decisions that the BPOC makes during these important meetings," said CBB and BPOC Chair Jared Brackett.

Nine contractors presented fund requests totaling \$47,725,121. The BPOC approved proposals from eight national beef organizations as follows:

American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, \$670,996; Cattlemen's Beef Board, \$1,689,915; Foundation for Meat

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and Poultry Research and Education, \$646,144; Meat Import Council of America / Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative, \$497,037; National Cattlemen's Beef Association, \$26,442,207; National Institute for Animal Agriculture, \$89,466; North American Meat Institute, \$994,068; and U.S. Meat Export Federation, \$8,350,170.

Broken out by budget component the FY 2021 Plan of Work for the CBB budget includes:

- ▶ \$9.8 million for promotion programs;
- ▶ \$8.9 million for research programs;
- ▶ \$7.3 million for consumer information programs;
- ▶ \$3.3 million for industry information programs;
- ▶ \$8.4 million for foreign marketing and education in 80 countries;
- ▶ \$1.7 million for producer communications.

The full FY 2021 CBB budget is approximately \$43.1 million.

Separate from the authorization requests, other expenses funded include \$254,000 for program evaluation; \$445,000 for program development; \$720,000 for USDA oversight, which includes \$450,000 for Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) oversight and \$190,000 for CBB's legal and compliance; and \$2.1 million for CBB administration. The FY 2021 budget represents a decrease of 3.2%, or \$1.4 million, from the \$44.5 million FY 2020 budget.

All authorization requests and budgets were sent on to the full CBB for approval, then to AMS for review, with a start date for the new fiscal year on Oct. 1.

For more information about the Beef Checkoff and its programs, including promotion, research, foreign marketing, industry information, consumer information and safety, contact the CBB at 303-220-9890 or visit DrivingDemandForBeef.com.

▶▶▶ NCBA Showcases Industry Commitment to Sustainability

In a continued effort to protect the reputation of the beef industry, the NCBA is ramping up efforts to highlight the importance of sustainability to the beef industry and its continued commitment to being stewards of the land and environment.

These efforts, which will peak to coincide with Climate Week NYC, include a consumer-focused news story to be distributed nationally, targeted media outreach to offer beef sustainability experts and resources to sustainability journalists, and sharing of sustainability facts and resources on the *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* social media accounts.

The tactics highlight the following facts:

- ▶ According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, greenhouse gas from beef cattle represents only 2% of emissions in United States.
- ▶ The United States produces 18% of the world's beef with only 6% of the world's cattle.
- ▶ Between 1977 and 2007, the U.S. beef industry has reduced the carbon footprint of beef cattle by more than 16% while producing slightly more beef, thanks to continued improvement in sustainability practices and more effective use of resources.
- ▶ Today, U.S. grasslands utilized by the beef industry sequester and store 7.4 Pg Carbon, which is the equivalent of taking 5.76 billion cars off the road.
- ▶ Cattle not only recycle, they upcycle by eating human-inedible plants and turning them into high-quality protein.

"Beef farmers and ranchers recognize the importance of caring for the environment and we strive to ensure continuous improvement in managing the land, water and air resources in our care," said Florida

rancher Marty Smith, who is also serving as the current NCBA president. "We know that optimal management of the resources upon which our animals and our

livelihoods depends is critical to the longevity of our farms and ranches and that's why cattlemen and

cattlemen and cattlemen are an important part of solving the environmental issues facing the global population."

We need ruminant animals, like beef cattle, to help make more protein with less, and we've proven in the United States that beef can be raised sustainably.

▶▶▶ AFBFA launches 'easy button' for elementary ag education

New at-home learning resources are now available to parents and teachers clamoring for content. The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBFA) unveiled a new webpage featuring weekly lesson plans dedicated to helping students in kindergarten through fifth grade learn where their food comes from while helping parents and teachers keep children engaged.

"We are thrilled to be launching this weekly series of virtual learning tools for parents, teachers and students," AFBFA Executive Director Daniel Meloy said. "Providing engaging lesson plans and exciting content helps support our goal at the Foundation for Agriculture to provide an 'easy button' for at-home learning during this time so many of us are juggling priorities while trying to ensure kids enjoy virtual learning."

The resource page contains free weekly activities, which focus around a central theme and can be done independently of one another. The first lesson, which is live now, is titled "Who is a farmer?" and includes several videos, an interactive online game and a selection of suggested discussion questions.



“Learning about agriculture is a fun way to help kids to think differently about traditional math and science with lessons that creatively incorporate both of those

subjects, tying them together perfectly with the wonders of today’s agriculture,” Meloy said.

Other educational resources offered by AFBFA include a series of

accurate and engaging agriculture books published through Feeding Minds Press, Ag Mags focused on various agriculture topics, full-length lesson plans and more.

Visit the Foundation for Agriculture At Home Learning page at <https://www.agfoundation.org/at-home-learning>. |

▶▶▶ Matsushima receives industry achievement award

“Learn the good things, forget the bad things.” That’s 99-year-old John Matsushima’s advice for living a good life.

Japanese-American heritage did not always make it easy, but you won’t often hear him talk about it. Instead, he focuses on the people he’s worked with — colleagues, peers and graduate students — as the secret to his success.

For his immeasurable impact on the industry and the people in it, Matsushima received the 2020 Feeding Quality Forum Industry Achievement Award. He was recognized during the event Aug. 25-26.

It started with curiosity piqued at his father’s purchase of 10 heifers and one bull at the Denver Union Stockyards: “I always thought, how can cattle eat green grass and then produce red meat?”

The boy enrolled in 4-H and Future Farmers of America and soon won a cattle feeding contest. Two subsequent scholarships paid his way to Colorado State University (Colorado A&M at the time) to receive his bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

While conducting research for his doctorate at the

University of Nebraska, Matsushima caught the attention of the Monfort family when he thought up one of the biggest contributions to the feeding industry to date: the steam corn flaker.

“We were having breakfast one morning, and instead of bacon and eggs, we were having cereal,” he recalls. “It came to my mind, maybe what we ought to do is feed cattle a warm breakfast.”

That revolution lowered costs for the feeder and, in turn, the beef consumer.

“By improving the feed efficiency, you can trace this back to the economy,” Matsushima says. “So today, the consumer can buy their beef almost 10% cheaper than before.”

Steam-flaking was the tip of the iceberg for Matsushima.

When he noticed scours tormenting young

calves, he tried antibiotics, which practically eliminated the problem. He followed those calves through to the packing plant and discovered they had no abscessed livers.

Matsushima made everything better for feedyard cattle, from curtailing foot rot with extended concrete aprons at bunks to creating a baked “feed grade” urea, and incorporating higher roughage to grain rations.

When cattle feeding started, the consensus called for very long periods on feed to utilize surplus grain. As Matsushima discovered, this added surplus fat to beef carcasses. So the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) Fed Beef Contest was born.

He remained

superintendent of the contest for 20 years.

He also made quite an impression globally. Matsushima helped develop the first feedyard in Africa and consulted in countries like Germany, Australia and China. Perhaps his biggest international acclaim was in Japan, where he earned the Japanese Emperor award in 2009 at its highest level, the Emperor Citation.

Of all he’s done, Matsushima’s work with students brings him the most satisfaction.

“They would always ask curious questions,” he says. “They helped me a great deal.”

In all, he fostered discovery in more than 10,000 students and 55 graduate students, the latter helping to conduct the NWSS Fed Beef Contest and participating in his research projects.



John Matsushima was recognized for his contribution to the feeding industry during the 2020 Feeding Quality Forum.



One of those graduate students was longtime Elanco ruminant nutritionist Scott Laudert, who recalls Matsushima’s work ethic.

“He was always early to get into the office,” Laudert says, noting Matsushima was often the first to the feedyard at 4:30 or 5 o’clock in the morning.”

“He was just an exceptional teacher in that he’d take someone under his wing and teach them all they needed to know,” he says. “If they were able to perform, he’d just let them take off on their own.”

Matsushima doesn’t see these awards as recognition for himself, but of the people around him.

“You know, people don’t receive credit for what they’ve done themselves,” he says. “They’ve had other people help them, and that’s true with me. There were good friends and good family — they all supported me.”

That support team included his late wife, Dorothy; two children, Bob and Nancy; and four grandchildren.

“What I’m most proud of,” says Matsushima, “is my family. And I’m proud I’m an American citizen.”

— by Abbie Burnett, Certified Angus Beef LLC